Good elements of composition including off-center subject placement, path and fence used as lead-ins and trees to frame, combine to add impact to Monte Nagler's photograph made high in the Alps in Gimmelwald, Switzerland.

What separates ordinary, great?

photography
Monte Nagler

What separates a good photograph from an ordinary snapshot? What makes friends and family ask to see more instead of thinking, "I've seen enough."

Adding stopping power and impact to your pictures is the answer. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by using good, effective composition.

Composition can be thought of as the meaningful placement of the main subject and supporting elements in the viewfinder, including the elimination of unnecessary and unwanted detail.

So the next time you look through your camera and are about to push the shutter — stop. Yes, stop and take a good, second look. Is your subject placed in a dynamically strong strong part of the frame? If it's a person, see if there's a tree or telephone pole "growing" your subject's head. Check all four corners of the viewfinder for anything that's distracting and doesn't belong.

Effective composition begins with a solid look through the camera and a calculated determination of what you, the photographer, want to record on film in the most effective way.

Here are some guidelines to help you plan and obtain good composition.

- Consider vertical vs. horizontal. Most cameras produce a rectangular picture so try fitting this format to your subject. People and trees go up and down, so most often a vertical composition should be used. Horizons go sideways, so a horizontal format is appropriate.
- Move in close. Fill the frame with your subject. This way, your picture is simplified and the viewer's attention isn't distracted. When photographing a person or an animal, filling the frame is easily done with a telephoto lens.
- Check subject placement. Avoid placing the main subject in the middle of the picture. Photographs appear static and less interesting this way. Rather, position the subject off-center in the viewfinder. This way, your picture will have more impact.
- Frame your subject. Be on the lookout for an overhanging tree branch or an archway that will give your shot added strength.
- Use lead-in lines. These are elements in the picture that help direct attention toward the subject. Lead-in lines can be roads, fences or streams. You may find others.
- Watch your horizons. Above all, make sure they are level in the viewfinder, not running up or downhill. A low horizon line will accentuate spaciousness, especially when you have a dramatic sky. A high horizon line de-emphasizes the sky and, instead, will suggest closeness.

Most importantly, get in the frame of mind as you look through the frame of your viewfinder that you are now "making a photograph," not merely taking a snapshot.

© 1989, Monte Nagler

Violinist is guest

Violin soloist Tapani Yrjola will be featured in the 8 p.m. concert Friday night in Plymouth-Salem High School of the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra.

Tapani Yrjola
PSO guest artist

Familiar to devoted Plymouth Symphony audiences, Yrjola recently returned from Finland and will perform Violin Concerto in D Minor by Sibelius. Concertmaster for the symphony for the past two years, Yrjola now holds the post of chairman of the violin department, Joensun Conservatory, Finland.

Yrjola earned both a doctorate and a master's in violin performance from the University of Michigan in 1989 and 1982, respectively.

His numerous awards include the Sebelius Scholar to the United States, the Finlandia Foundation award, the Hoover Foundation and the Finnish Cultural Foundation Award. In addition, he was performed extensively in the Scandinavian countries in solo recitals and symphony appearances.

Tickets for the show are $8 general admission, $7 for seniors and $2 for students K-12 and will be available at the box office. Plymouth-Salem High School is at 46181 Joy Road, Canton. For more information, call the PSO office, 451-2112.

Successful artist thrives on versatility

artifacts
David Messing

NOW THAT my boys are older, the morning work of *getting them off to school* is, pretty much over.

Scott, the oldest, is in college. Kevin is in his senior year of high school. And Adam is in the fifth grade.

But just a few years ago, getting them all ready for school was quite an ordeal for my wife. She had to be a psychologist and a minister to get Adam to even think about going to school.

By 9:15 a.m., Sandy had been a cook, laundry maid, counselor, treasure hunter, cheerleader and sometimes chauffeur. So versatility is the key element for the successful wife and mother of this day and age.

VERSATILITY IS, likewise, a key element for the successful artist. Of course "success" *is a very relative* term.

So let me clarify that by assuming that you wish to earn money doing artwork. If that is what you want, ask yourself, "What do I do that people would be willing to pay for?"

If you cannot come up with a selection of commercial applications of your abilities, then you need to become more versatile.

Without versatility, you are like a store that sells only one item. Artwork is much like a retail store. You are the store front, your abilities are your services and your artwork is your stock in trade.

FOR EXAMPLE, last week I received a last-minute request for a master sculpture of a new toy to come on the market.

My original piece was sent immediately to Tokyo for tooling and I thought I was all done. Two days later, I received an even more frantic call saying, "They were shooting the commercial in three days in California, and I need the full color package design tomorrow."

Of course, I didn't like the last-minute order, but the job was fun and rewarding. Then I painted some signs, started some sketches for an office plaza logo and entered a few pieces in an art show.

On my "board" for next week is a caricature, a rubber mold for a customer's sculpture, promotional cartoons for a hospital and an airbrush retouching of a photograph. My point, of course, is to show you how open the field of art can be . . . if you are versatile.

HERE IS a checklist of some of the stock in trade you should carry in your art "store."

Product illustrations in pen and ink and color. Airbrushing, both paintings and photo retouching. Cartooning and caricatures are always in demand.

Sculpturing is wonderful, and often you are the inventor's first approach to a three-dimensional product. Not to mention the purely aesthetic qualities of sculpture.

Sign painting is a must, and the financial benefits are immediate. Fashion design or the ability to draw people will always bring you plenty of work as in catalogs, manuals and pamphlets.

Wall graphics are always fun and usually pay well.

SO DON'T be discouraged if very few of these areas of art seem familiar. You can learn to do anything and even earn as you learn.

Don't hesitate to ask questions. Most artists are happy to share their knowledge.

David Messing has been an art teacher in the area for many years. He is also the owner of the ARt Store & More in Livonia.

Symphony plans competition

Livonia Symphony Orchestra (formerly Oakway Symphony) is finalizing plans for its 1990 Young Artist Competition for the 12th year.

Competition, open to young artist residents of Michigan, will include all instrumental, piano and vocal students.

The Livonia Symphony Society will award first and second prizes of $600 and $400 each. An additional award is the $300 Nelda DiBiasi Memorial Prize.

Auditions will be Jan. 13-14 in Kresge auditorium at Madonna College, Livonia. First prize winner will appear as soloist with the symphony Friday, Feb. 16, in concert in Churchill High School, Livonia.

To compete, instrumental and piano students must not have reached the age of 25 years before Feb. 16, 1990, with vocal contestants not reaching the age of 30 before the above date.

To obtain rules of the competition and application forms, write to the Livonia Symphony, 18549 Levan Road, Livonia 48152, or call 471-7049. Application deadline is Dec. 31.

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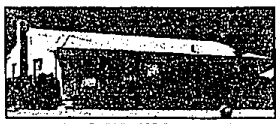
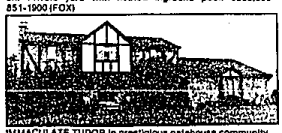
SHARP RAMBLEWOOD COLONIAL - executive tudor located in exclusive gatehouse community. Four bedroom, three and a half bath, formal living and dining rooms. Island kitchen. Private yard with heated inground pool. $265,000 851-1900 (FOX)


BRICK RANCH WITH FIREPLACE. Fresh paint and new carpet in some rooms. Three bedrooms plus two in basement, finished recreation room, 2½ car garage, on big lot. $81,500 477-1111

VERY DESIREABLE THREE BEDROOM one and a half story home with basement, and Florida room connecting house and garage. Close to downtown Farmington, library, shopping, theatre. For starters or retirees. Fantastic location. $99,900 477-1111

SHARP COLONIAL. Best priced 4 bedroom colonial situated on a cul-de-sac in Buckingham Woods. Large size rooms. Dining room, family room with wet bar and brick fireplace. Kitchen with many built-in cabinets. First floor laundry, new roof, central air, alarm system, mortage assumable. $169,000 644-4700


IMMACULATE TUDOR in prestigious gatehouse community. Ceramic tile entry, fireplace in living and family rooms, 4 bedrooms, 2 full baths, and 2 half baths, lovely finished rec. room with wet bar, beautiful deck, security system, much more. $258,000 851-1900 (APP)

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BLOOMFIELD HILLS		
1530 Groton, $227,700	644-4700	
1766 Alexander, $365,000	644-4700	
1770 Alexander $365,000	644-4700	
5581 Kenmoor, $168,900	644-4700	
DETROIT		
22482 Argus, $37,900	559-2300	
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CONDOMINIUMS		
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31993 W. Twelve Mile Rd #209, $81,900	477-1111	
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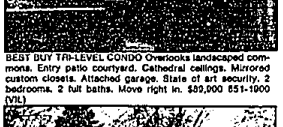
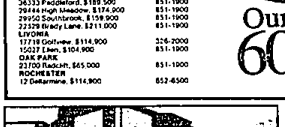
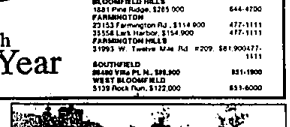
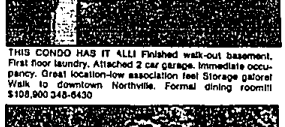
THIS CONDO HAS IT ALL! Finished walk-out basement. First floor laundry. Attached 2 car garage. Immediate occupancy. Great location-low association fee! Storage galore! Walk to downtown Northville. Formal dining room!! $108,900 348-5430


FANTASTIC FARMINGTON Three bedroom brick ranch with basement, 2½ car detached garage. Large lovely lot with mature trees. Great location. Hurry! Only $84,900 851-1900 (MAR)


IDEAL LOCATION CONDO. Two bedroom end unit, easy access to 696 x-way, shopping. Carpet throughout, laundry room same floor. Pool and tennis courts. $61,900 477-1111


CONTEMPORARY CONDO Completely upgraded 3 bedroom townhouse in West Bloomfield. New kitchen, new verticals and track-lites throughout. Finished lower level. $122,900 661-6700 (ROC)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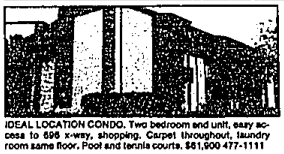
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SUPERB LOCATION Custom home within walking distance to Northville library, churches and historical area. Fieldstone fireplace, pegged wood floors, beamed ceiling. Ravine enhances modern updates such as; central air and solar hot water. $269,000 348-5430

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